Insurance Scheme for railway passengers

*189. SHRI PARAGADA KOTAIAH: SHRI H.HANUMAN-THAPPA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of India has decided to introduce insurance for railway passengers;

(b) if so, what are the details of the scheme; and

(c) when it will be put into practice?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K.C. LENKA):(a) to (c) At present section 124 of the Railways Act, 1989 provides for payment of compensation to bonafide passengers who are injured or to the dependants of those passengers who die as a result of passenger train accident. However, bonafide passengers who die or get injured on account of terrorist acts, violent attacks, robberies, dacoities, rioting, shoot-outs or arson are not covered under the existing provisions. It is proposed also to cover such incidents of deaths/injuries to bonafide passengers on account of terrorist acts, violent attacks, robberies, dacoities, rioting, shoot-outs or arson under the proposed Insurance Scheme.

Implementation of the proposed scheme depends upon the amendments to be made in the Railways Act, 1989 and also Railway Claims Tribunal Act, 1987.

It is proposed to introduce a Bill in the current Session of the Parliament to suitably amend these two acts, namely Railways Act, 1989 and Railway Claims Tribunal Act, 1987.

Destruction of forests in Aravali range

*190. SHRI P. UPENDRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the environmentalists have expressed concern over the destruction of forests in the Aravali range, covering Gujarat, Rajasthan and Haryana; and

(b) what steps Government are taking to remove the threat to environment due to destruction of forests in the area?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government have taken following steps to remove the threat to environment due to destruction of forests in the area:

(i) Under the provision of Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986 the Aravali region coming in the districts of Alwar in Rajasthan and Gurgaon in Haryana have been declared as ecologically fragile areas.

(ii) A project for rehabilitation of common lands in the Aravali Hills of Haryana is being implemented at a total cost of Rs. 48.15 crores. This project, which is assisted by European Economic Community (EEC), is under implementation over a period of eight years.

(iii) Another afforestation project for Aravali hills of Rajasthan is being implemented with the assistance provided by Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF), Japan. This project has an outlay of Rs. 166.9 crores over a period of five years.

(iv) The forest laws are being strictly implemented in the states through which the Aravali ranges pass.

(v) People's participation in joint forest management is being encourage.